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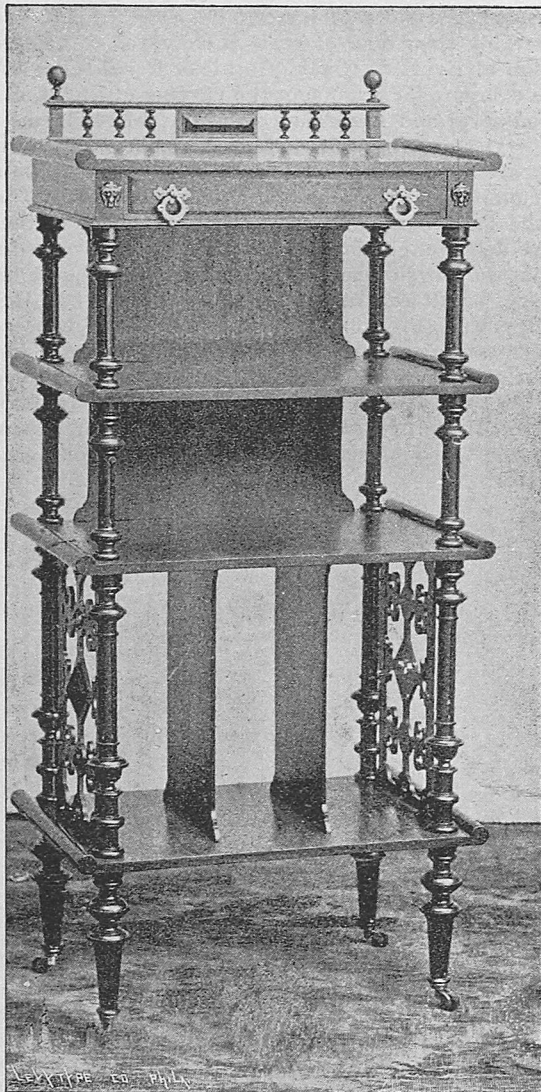
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THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

the accompanying illustration. Excepting the carved sides of the box, there is nothing difficult in its making, the legs being turned and fluted only.

We show, also, a side table or music rack of beautiful proportions. There are several varieties of these tables now made, the chief feature being the turned up ends of the shelves, and the use of fancifully sawn panels, between which are vertical panels for holding music, portfolios, etc., The wood, which is walnut, is not polished, but simply has the grain filled with wax.

Some odd looking wine services now to be seen have real utility. A decanter of long cucumber shape rests at an angle on a couple of legs near the neck, which is beaked, and the stopper resem-



A PARISIAN MUSIC-RACK.

bles a bird's head, while the whole resembles a grotesque animal. By turning the bottle over on the legs, there is no need to lift it in pouring out the contents. The whole service of glasses and basins is made to match, and is cast in the multi-colored, streaked glass now so popular.

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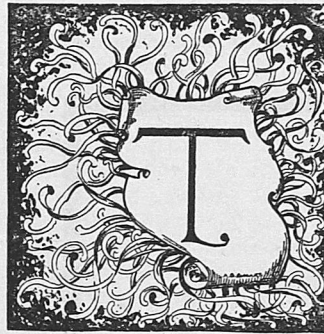
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THE APPLICATION OF ORNAMENT—III.

BY LEWIS F. DAY.



THE purpose and position of ornament belong to the wider subject of decoration, at which we have not yet arrived, and come only incidentally under our consideration. On the method of its execution depends, as already said, the very conception of ornamental design. One cannot properly discuss style without reference to material and tools.

The style peculiar to each particular kind of work, is, indeed, so strongly marked, that it would be quite feasible to classify ornament according to its evolution. Mr. Wornum's analogy between "style" in ornament and "hand" in writing, holds absolutely good. There never was a tool or process, but it wrote its character on the work done. It was so in a simple, practical matter-like lettering. The cuneiform character of the Assyrian inscriptions was developed chisel in hand. It was the chisel that shaped the hieroglyphics of Egypt. In a certain bluntness of the early Greek character the influence of the stylus is apparent. Chinese and Japanese writing must first have been done with the brush.

The various shapes of letters on Fig. 12 are instructive. The simple form of the Roman capitals, A B C, might, like the Greek, first have been indented on a soft substance with a point. The later form of lettering, D E F, with its varying thickness of line and its spurred extremities, was better calculated for engraving on hard stone. The use of the thick and thin lines (the down-stroke and up-stroke), comes of the use of the pen, and so plainly, does the characteristic thickening of the backs of certain Gothic capitals, such as G. The smaller Roman letters, h i j, and still more plainly, the italics k l m, are unmistakably related to the "round-hand" n o p. But it is in the mediaeval "black letter" that penmanship is most strictly pronounced, as in the letters q r s, in the capitals T U V, and in the more fantastically flourishing W, the same plate.

That our own printed type does not more distinctly reveal the intervention of the metal worker, is accounted for by our following the historic, pen-born, fashion of lettering—I would say



FIG. 12.—LETTERING, SHOWING ITS RELATION TO THE PEN, ETC.

THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

so closely—but that history and sentiment must be allowed to count for something; and it would be hard to set a limit to their just influence.

In our day we are given to the cultivation of "a good business hand," which is just a little characterless and monotonous, as are, indeed, the lives of some of us who accomplish that modest end. Time was when the pen of the ready writer indulged in



FIG. 13.—EGYPTIAN SCULPTURE—BASALT.

occasional flourishes. There is no time for such frivolity now-a-days; and what little character there is left in our handwriting seems likely to be sacrificed to the convenience of the stylographic pen—even if we do not give up penmanship altogether in favor of the typewriter.

Style, then, is not so much a thing of dates and countries as of materials and tools.

Whenever the development of ornament is discussed, it is the custom to begin with the savage. How the Aboriginal developed into the Assyrian is not very clearly shown. But from Assyrian art is traced Egyptian, and from that again Greek art, and its Roman imitation—all very plausibly. The foundation of Byzantine art upon the ruins of Classic, the growth of Gothic, the reaction of the Renaissance, its transplanting and its degradation, follow in accustomed order.

It is easier to jog along the well-beaten road, though it be a trifle tedious, than to explain how, all the while, parallel with this, Oriental art was pursuing a course of its own; infringing, nevertheless, at times upon Western art, and, whenever, that was the case, leaving the imprint of its touch upon it.

This would be well worth doing; but it would take volumes to do it in, and would demand, besides, historical knowledge far greater than I can pretend to—a knowledge, perhaps, scarcely compatible with the necessary knowledge of art. One feels always how hard it is for the artist to equip himself with the necessary scientific and historic knowledge; as for the man of learning and research to cultivate that susceptibility to art necessary to any profitable discussion of the subject.

Still more to the purpose would it be to classify ornament according as it was plaited, notched, scratched, turned, modeled, carved, inlaid, printed, woven, embroidered, or what not.

In such a classification, architecture would divide itself into masonry, brick, concrete, timber, plaster and iron styles. The

subsidiary arts would class themselves in conformity with the use of clay, stone, wood, metal, yarn and so on.

There would be further subdivisions into granite, marble, sandstone; into hard and soft wood, close-grained and variegated; into wrought, cast, chased or beaten metal; into tapestry, cloth, damask, velvet, lace, brocade, embroidery and the like.

What are known as the historic styles might be examined by the way; they would go to illustrate the development of style more technically considered. In all probability it would be shown that, wherever the historic style is marked, its character is to be traced to some mode of workmanship which, if it did not actually inspire it, made it advisable. The characteristic ornamental forms of a period or people can usually be traced to the technique and needs of that same people. In this far, ornament rises to the dignity of history.

A tolerably clear idea of style is conveyed to us at once by the mention of Egyptian, Greek, Gothic or Renaissance sculpture. But if we compare for a moment the carving of Egypt, of Greece, and of Mediaeval and Renaissance Europe, we shall see at once that the styles are more distinctly of a place and of a period than they are markedly granite, marble, and soft stone styles.

The monumental simplicity of the graven obelisk, the refinement of the Panathenaic frieze, the rude grandeur of the Gothic portal, the delicate elaboration of the Italian arabesque, were but the natural development of the resources at hand. Working in porphyry, basalt or granite, severe simplicity was inevitable, and the Egyptian (Fig. 13) was severe with a vengeance. There was no temptation to him to fritter away all breadth in the accumulation of petty detail. On the other hand, the even textured but less obstinate marble encouraged the Greek sculptor and his fifteenth century successor (Figs. 14 and 15) to greater and ever greater subtility of execution; which again would have been



FIG. 14.—GREEK SCULPTURE—MARBLE.

quite out of the question in working the more friable sandstone native to Northern Europe (Fig. 16).

We associate the coarser treatment with Gothic carving in particular. It is all the more noticeable, therefore, how the sculptor of the Renaissance, working in coarse stone, arrived at results in some respects so like Gothic work. Compare Fig. 15 with Fig. 16 and see the difference between early Renaissance

THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

marble and later Renaissance sandstone. The later work is much the rougher, as sandstone is rougher than marble.

Apart from all that has been said, there are conditions of sunlight and grey skies, dry atmosphere and moist, which also have their say in the character of carving everywhere.

To explain at length the invariable conventionality of historic ornament, would be to write the history of the various crafts, each of which might claim a treatise to itself. All that



FIG. 15.—RENAISSANCE SCULPTURE—MARBLE.

one can do within the limits of a manual like this is to give instances, typical as may be, of the influence of material, tool or process of execution upon design, and to show how the forms of ornament were inevitably modified by such influence, if not actually due to it.

In discussing in a former text-book the anatomy of pattern, I pointed out how its construction was affected by, and very often directly due to, some particular manufacture or method of work. So it is with the details of ornamental design.

The exquisite simplicity of certain characteristic patterns familiar in the figured velvets of the fifteenth century, is cleverly calculated to disturb the least possible amount of the sumptuous pile, so that the full value of the rich texture is preserved.

In the old-fashioned damask patterns the big broad leaves and scrolls are planned (like a Turkey carpet or an Indian rug) with a view, before all things, of getting a broken effect of color. The designer relied upon the quality of the silk, with its varying sheen, to alleviate the exceeding flatness of the pattern. No treatment less broad would have done justice to the quality of the stuff, which in those days was worth consideration. Compare even the comparatively debased specimen of woollen damask in Fig. 17, with the current designs in linen damask, and it will be seen how well advised were our grandfathers. Nineteenth-century manufacturers who desire equally to exhibit the quality of their wool, can think of no other way of doing it than by leaving the ground for the most part empty. They dearly love a spot pattern. It is possibly out of consideration for the lady purchaser that modern table-linen is for the most part so *petite* in style? The consideration of the customer and not the thing to be done, is responsible for much of our modern misdoing.

In certain woven fabrics of our time the hope of disguising

the shabbiness of the substance has prompted the adoption of the fussiest kind of pattern. One had need beware of textiles worried all over with pattern; they are often expressly designed to hide shoddy. The manufacturer of *bona fide* silk or wool, or other worthy material, would do well, for his part, to identify his goods with a kind of design which the baser fabrics cannot imitate without convicting themselves.

The character of the Lyons silk designs of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries owes very much to the circumstance, that the lustrous material was so fascinating that artists were led astray from beautiful form, and simply revelled in the delights of color. Charming as these silks often are, translate any one of the patterns into uncompromising black and white, and you are disillusioned at once. The most characteristic of them lose all their charm in monochrome. It is hard to realize that forms like those in Fig. 18 can ever pass for beautiful; but it is wonderful what color and texture will reconcile us to in the way of design. That is no reason why the artist should leave us to reconcile ourselves with ugly forms, still less why we should accept such models without attempting to improve upon them.

The Byzantine coloring, in bands according to the weft (Fig. 19) is almost brutal in its outspoken acceptance of the limitations of weaving. It speaks volumes for the safety with which such limitations may be accepted, that the contradiction between the forms of design and the scheme of color does not in the least offend one in the silk. The same kind of thing occurs sometimes in Japanese stuffs.

Until recently, the conventional treatment of foliated forms always and everywhere confessed quite frankly the way it was done. The so-called honeysuckle of the Greeks I have shown elsewhere to be directly traceable to the use of the brush, as was the case with other familiar forms of Greek ornament.

The Corinthian capital and the acanthus scroll, even when



FIG. 16.—RENAISSANCE SCULPTURE—SANDSTONE.

they most nearly approach nature (which is never very closely), are always modified according to the conditions of sculpture.

In the Byzantine version of the Classic leafage, in which the sculptors made abundant use of the drill, the drill-holes form an element in the design. The same thing occurs in much of the later Gothic foliage, more especially in German work.

The Arabian borders in Fig. 20, leave no possible doubt as



FIG. 17.—WOOL DAMASK—Broad Surfaces Calculated to Exhibit the Quality of Material.

to their having been traced on the plastic stucco with the modeling tool. The workman did what was simplest for him to do. We may be sure, too, that it was the ease with which the plaster could be manipulated, which led to the extraordinary elaboration characterizing the impressed diapers on the walls of the Alhambra.

The somewhat savage enrichment of our own Norman buildings forcibly recalls the rude way it was done. It is more properly speaking, chopped than carved.

To refer to specific material, you cannot look at the iron work of any early period without seeing how directly the forge



FIG. 18.—LYONS SILK—Trivial Design, Disguised by the Sheen and Color of the Material

affected its design. It was the obvious thing to do to beat out the metal into a bar, and equally obvious to beat out the bar into the familiar spirals. And the very difficulty of forging a perfectly even bar was the surest preventive against mechanical results, such as we see in the handiwork of the modern smith, whose bars are made for him by machine.

The forms in Fig. 21, belong more distinctly to the forge than to France of the thirteenth century or Italy of the seventeenth. The metal-workers in different parts of mediaeval Germany give different expression to their work (Fig. 22). If a man had anything to say he expressed himself. A strong man would found a school. But it is a smith's work everywhere. Even in the decadence of the art, when it bursts out into an uncomfortable bristling form of foliage, it breathes always the atmosphere of the forge. If nature inspired it, it was the hammer and the pinchers that shaped it.

It is precisely for this reason that similar forms in cast iron are so singularly ill-judged. There is nothing contemptible in cast iron, if we would but abstain from the reproduction in it of forms inappropriate to casting. We should have no cause to regret the institution of the foundry, if founders would but put art into their molds; and the first step toward that end would



FIG. 19.—BYZANTINE SILK.

be to dismiss from their memories the familiar forms of the forge. It is customary to talk about cast iron as if it were an abomination. It is its misapplication only that is objectionable. There is no reason why we should not do in iron something like what the Italians of the fifteenth century did in bronze—unless it be nineteenth century incompetence.

It is one of the wicked ways of our civilization to smooth out all character from workmanship. For idiomatic expression in ornament we have generally to travel back to a remote period. The angularity of the piece of darning in Fig. 23 is what might be called old-fashioned. But how it explains itself! No one who cares for needlework would wish to have it otherwise.

So in embroidery we look for color and not perfect lines; and so again in mosaic or stained glass—just as in glass-blowing—we properly expect to find lightness rather than precision of form.

In the pursuit of mechanical finish and the blind worship of nature, considerations of this kind are commonly lost sight of. The love of smoothness comes of our abuse of machinery. The

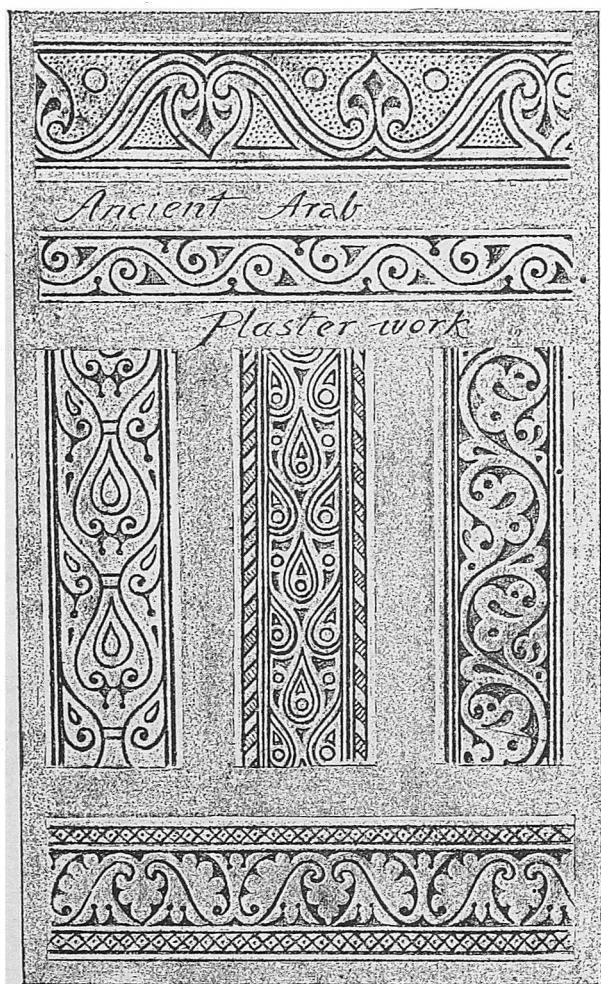


FIG. 20.—ARABIAN PATTERNS—Incised in Soft Plaster.

love of nature is not, as the realists—(so-called)—would have us believe, an invention of to-day. Artists have always loved and studied nature. Only in the historic treatment of natural forms, modeled in clay or plaster, carved in wood or stone, painted on wall or window, wrought in metal, or on a loom, or with the



FIG. 21.—IRONWORK—Characteristic Similarity of Motif in Work of Different Periods.

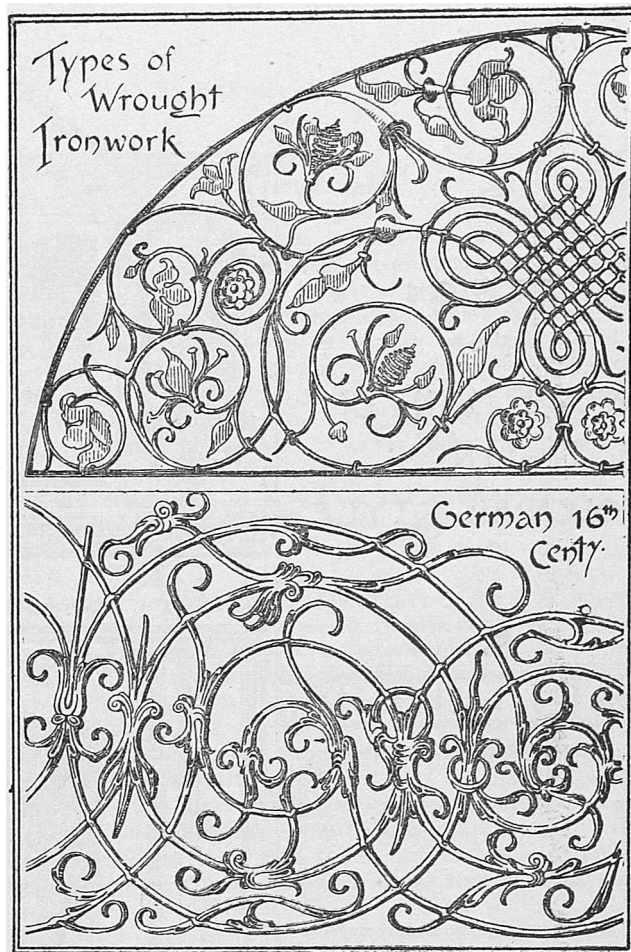


FIG. 22.—IRONWORK—Characteristically Different Types of Wrought Iron.

needle—there is always a touch of the tool which removes the rendering by so much—let us not say from nature, for the instinct which directs such modifications is natural enough—but from the imitation of nature. (To be continued.)



FIG. 23.—NEEDLEWORK—Characteristic Quality of Line.